

RIVER BASIN RESTORATION PRIORITIES UPDATE

In June 2008, new federal rules governing compensatory mitigation became effective and required all in-lieu fee (ILF) programs in the United States to develop instruments (legal documents) that must be approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). A fundamental part of the instrument requirements for ILFs was the development and approval of a Compensation Planning Framework (CPF) by which ILFs develop watershed plans and identify watershed restoration projects for implementation. As a result, the NC Division of Mitigation Services (DMS), formerly Ecosystem Enhancement Program, like all other ILFs in the country, cannot implement projects that are not developed under the CPF without approval from the Interagency Review Team. In July 2010, USACE and the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources signed DMS's [In-Lieu Fee Instrument](#) for the operation and use of its ILF programs for stream and wetland mitigation.

In accordance with the 2008 mitigation rule, DMS develops River Basin Restoration Priorities (RBRPs) for each of the 17 river basins in NC by conducting a detailed screening for each eight-digit catalog unit within a river basin. This screening results in the identification of priority 14-digit hydrologic unit (20-100 mi²) watersheds that exhibit a need for restoration and protection. These watersheds receive priority for DMS planning and restoration project funds. The designation may also benefit stakeholders applying for grants by giving added weight to proposals. Information on DMS's RBRP methodology is available at the following links:

- [2010 RBRP Updates](#)
- [2015 RBRP Transition Approach](#)

The most [current RBRP](#) information is available on DMS's website, listed along the right-hand side by river basin. Questions related to watershed plan requirements should be directed to the [watershed planner](#) assigned to the basin of interest.